

## **News from Ed Markey**

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

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### **MARKEY DEMANDS ANSWERS REGARDING LEAKING RADIOACTIVE SHIPMENT FROM PARIS TO LOUISIANA**

**Lawmaker queries whether terrorists could have already used FedEx, UPS, to ship radioactive materials to the U.S. for use in future attacks**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. --**

Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and co-chairman of the Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation, today released letters to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), U.S. Customs Service, FedEx and UPS regarding the manner in which radioactive shipments to the U.S. are secured.

"I am concerned that controls to prevent the improper or illegal importation of dangerous radioactive materials either do not exist or are not being fully enforced," said Rep. Markey. "Press reports detailing the failure to detect radioactive shipments as they enter the U.S. raises the possibility that terrorists could be using our postal and consignment carriers such as FedEx and UPS to send radioactive materials to the U.S. for use in future attacks, just as the hijackers used our flight schools and our airplanes to commit the attacks of September 11. This event should trigger multiple homeland security alarms both within our government and in our package-delivery system."

A January 10, 2002 article in the New York Times reported that FedEx shipped a 300 pound package containing 9400 curies of radioactive iridium-192 from Paris to the Source Production and Equipment Company in St. Rose, Louisiana. The package was reportedly emitting so much radiation by the time it was delivered that an individual exposed to it could have developed symptoms of radiation poisoning within several hours. The radiation leak went undetected by officials at both U.S. Customs and FedEx.

Rep. Markey's letters ask the NRC, U.S. Customs, FedEx and UPS for the following information:

- A description of the regulations and measures taken to ensure that radioactive shipments from abroad are being sent only to recipients with a license to possess the materials.
- A description of the regulations and processes used to ensure that packages labeled as containing radioactive materials as well as packages that are not labeled as containing radioactive materials undergo radiation screening.
- An explanation of what went wrong with the leaking shipment of radioactive iridium that was not detected by FedEx or U.S. Customs, and an analysis of the nature and adequacy of existing regulations and procedures in light of the apparent failure to prevent leakage of radiation from this shipment.

"Many reports have detailed the attempts of members of Al Qaeda to obtain radioactive materials in order to create and detonate dirty bombs or improvised nuclear bombs that could kill many people and radioactively contaminate entire communities," said Rep. Markey. "We need to make sure they are not able to do so by taking advantage of lax security at our borders or of our postal system."

For all correspondence on this issue, please refer to our website, [www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey).

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